

Utilities and Maintenance Emergencies

Gas Leak

- If any staff member or child smells gas, act quickly.
- Open windows immediately.
- Call **911** and report the possible gas leak.
- Do not turn any electrical switches **on OR off**. Extinguish all flames.
- Check all gas taps and turn them off.
- If necessary, turn off the gas main. The shutoff valve is next to the meter. Using a wrench, turn the valve a quarter turn in either direction.
- If the gas odor remains strong, evacuate the area immediately.
- Do not attempt re-entry until authorized by the fire department or other appropriate authority.
- Contact Regional Office to report gas leak.

Power Failure

- The building emergency exit light should come on automatically.
- The facility should have several flashlights. Staff should be able to readily locate flashlights and batteries.
- If power failure is due to weather, use a battery-operated radio to monitor weather conditions.
- In the event of a power failure, staff members on duty should contact the local power company and the Regional Office to report power failure.
- If power is out for 4 hours or more, contact parents to pick up children. Children must not be allowed to return to the facility until power is restored.

Loss of Water or Plumbing Problem (emergencies only)

- There should be an emergency supply of water located in the facility. Make staff aware of the location of the emergency water supply, and use it sparingly and only for emergency.
- In the event of water loss, staff on duty should contact the following:
 - The facility director or designee.
 - Local public utility company.
 - Sewer or water company if the outage is a result of an internal plumbing problem.
 - Regional Office to report incident.

Loss of Telephone

- In the event of loss of telephone services, the staff should contact the following:
 - Local telephone company repairs service. (only if loss of service is not the results of a general power failure).
 - The director or designee.

- Cellular phones may be used in the event regular service is disrupted. (Give parents this cellular number to call in emergency situations.)
- Notify the Regional Office and give the cellular number to your licensing specialist.

Loss of Heat/Air Conditioning (emergencies only)

- Contact the facility director or designee. The director should contact the installer of the system or company that services the unit(s).
- When the inside temperature exceeds the regulatory limits due to a failure of the heating or air system and the problem cannot be corrected within 4 hours, contact parents to pick up their children. [DSS Regulatory Services

Bomb Threats: Treat any bomb threat as real until proven otherwise.

- Call 911.
- Report unidentified or suspicious objects to the authorities.
- Evacuate to an outdoor area as far from the building as possible. Upon evacuation, leave all windows and doors open, if possible, to minimize shock damage.
- Upon arrival of law enforcement, the director or designee, if asked by law enforcement, will assist in the search (i.e., unlock doors, identify strange or suspicious objects).
- Do not re-enter the building until authorized by law enforcement.
- Notify Regional Office of bomb threat.



Phone Numbers

Region 1 (Upstate): 864-370-2318
1-800-637-8550

Region 2 (Midlands): 803-898-9001
1-800-202-1469

Region 3 (Low Country): 843-953-9780
1-800-260-0211

Region 4 (Pee Dee/Grand Strand): 843-661-6623
1-800-464-9138

Central Office: 803-898-9020
1-800-556-7445

ABC Call Center: 1-800-262-4416

DISASTER RESPONSE E-MAIL:
childcare.disaster.response@dss.sc.gov

DSS Brochure 2969 (SEP 08)

South Carolina Child Care Services



Health. Safety. Supervision.



DSS

Serving Children and Families

<http://childcare.sc.gov>

803-898-9020

A **Watch** means that conditions are present that could cause a weather emergency in the areas mentioned.

A **Warning** means that severe weather is expected and that precautions should be taken in the affected areas.

Severe Thunderstorm WATCH

- Advise all staff of the weather condition.
- Monitor radio/television news and/or NOAA Weather Radio for updates .
- Modify outdoor activities to ensure that relatively quick access to shelter is available.
- Do a count of children before moving to a different location, after arriving at the location, and after leaving the designated area.

Severe Thunderstorm WARNING

- Advise all staff of the weather condition.
- Stop all outdoor activities and seek shelter.
- Move all children to a designated location. Do a count of all children prior to moving to new location, after arriving and before leaving the area.
- Maintain flashlight and voice contact among staff members at all times.
- Ensure all children wear shoes.

Once the storm has passed:

- Do a count of all children.
- Provide any necessary first aid and call 911 if needed.
- Check the entire building for any damages.
- Turn on and test utilities.
- Notify the Licensing Regional Office if there are any damages or injuries. Notify parents as required in the Child Care Regulations.

Tornado WATCH

- Take all precautions for a Thunderstorm Watch, and upon the approach of a storm, cease outdoor activities that would delay seeking shelter.

Tornado WARNING

- Take all precautions for a Thunderstorm Warning, and direct children and staff to pre-identified shelter space in an underground area of the facility or an interior hallway on the lowest level of the building, away from windows, if possible. Seek protection under a desk or table.
- Monitor radio continuously.
- Use caution when entering a damaged building.
- Report injuries, structural and utilities damages.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are usually predicted several days in advance. As soon as decision is made to close or dismiss early, communicate this decision to parents and staff.

- Monitor Hurricane Watches and Warnings.
- Check status of battery powered radio.
- Advise all staff members of weather conditions.
- Secure outside equipment. Move records, computers, etc. to safer areas within the facility.
- Maintain flashlight and voice contact among staff members at all times.
- Account for all children before moving to a safe place, after arriving, and before leaving the area.
- Direct all children to sit on the floor in a designated area, not in front of doors or windows.
- Ensure all children wear shoes.
- If location becomes unsafe, prepare to evacuate children and staff to a more secure facility. Consider road and safety conditions before doing so. The secure facility must be pre-approved by the Regional Office and pre-identified to parents.

- Once the storm has passed, do a head count and check the complete building for any damages.
- Notify 911, utilities agents, etc., if necessary.
- Contact parents and Regional Office to report conditions.

Flooding

- Monitor announcements of Flood Watches and Warnings.
- Inspect facility for area(s) prone to flooding and determine which records or other equipment can be moved higher in facility. Store chemicals where flood waters cannot reach them and cause contamination.
- Make transportation preparations to move children and staff, if evacuation is needed.
- Close and evacuate the facility, if needed. Heed evacuation orders from public safety officials.
- If the facility is in a low-lying area vulnerable to flooding, evacuate immediately.
- Follow the safest evacuation route possible (listen to weather and news reports for routes). Maintain voice contact among staff members, and account for all children and staff members.
- If time and conditions permit, unplug all electrical appliances.
- Bring loose outdoor articles inside or tie them down.
- Lock all doors.

Winter and Ice Storms

- Monitor winter or ice storm watches, warnings or travel advisories.
- Consider pre-storm closing (night before) or early closing, depending on conditions.
- Advise all staff members of weather conditions and decision on pre-storm closing or early closing.

Hazardous Material Accidents

- Evacuate the area immediately.
- Do **not** turn electrical switches on or off.
- Extinguish all open flames.
- Evacuate to an area (if possible) upwind and uphill of the facility.
- Call 911 and report the spill.
- Do not attempt to rescue someone who has been overcome by fumes.
- If anyone has contact with chemicals, wash off the chemicals immediately.
- Evacuate using the safest route possible. Maintain voice contact among staff and account for all children and staff.
- Do not return to the building until authorized to do so by the fire department or other appropriate authority.

Fire Emergency and Evacuation

- Evacuate the area (stay low, as smoke and gasses collect near the ceiling first).
- Activate the fire alarm.
- Call 911. Identify alternate methods of communication to use in the event that the fire causes phones to be out of order.
- Account for all children and staff members by using the attendance list; move to other locations as required.
- Once children and staff are in a safe location, notify the Regional Office.
- Staff trained to use fire extinguishers may use them to put out a small fire.
- All staff should know the location of the fire extinguishers in the facility.
- Parents should be informed of a small fire at time of pick up.